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## THE SCIENCE OF HISTORY.\*

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THIS book must be considered in fact, though not in name, a valuable contribution to the science of Anthropology. For the laws by which nations or collections of men are necessarily governed during that period of the existence of mankind which is called the historical are at present the highest problems to which the attention of the anthropologist can be directed. We say at present, because it seems very possible that, as mankind have lived many decades of thousands of years without a history, so the time may come when it may be wise enough to live in such a condition of true adaptation to the ends of its being, that all that we now call history may become unnecessary, and the historical period be looked on merely as the school-boy days of mankind by our descendants. Such an expectation, however, will not be found in the pages of Draper. His book is at once the complement and the antagonist to that of Buckle. Those who have found arguments for opposing Buckle's conclusions in his want of plan and the vagueness of his aims, will need all their ingenuity to prevent their own weapons being turned against themselves in estimating Draper. Those who deride the idea of the perfectibility of man, or rather the possibility of the indefinite diminution of his imperfections, will find that the science of history, which they couple with it, is capable of being made a fact without the admission of such an idea. The colossal man of Comte and Temple is here divided into many colossi, who live and die like individual men. The law of their organisation is, according to Draper, to be studied in the individual, and the fate of death and extinction must inevitably be likewise theirs also. It is, however, only in an intellectual point of view that the different phases of life are held to correspond in this comparison of the individual with nations, each of which is shown to pass through the five several ages of credulity, inquiry, faith, reason, and decrepitude.

The idea of there being any fundamental differences in race or any virtue in heredity is scouted by Buckle; nor do they form any of Draper's master-keys for unlocking the hidden treasures of anthropological wisdom. To Buckle the development of all nations seems only to differ according to the different circumstances they are placed in. To Draper each holds its peculiar course, affected and modified more in its expression than essentially by things outside itself. The two volumes of Buckle form only a part of the introduction to a work no man could ever have lived to complete. The two thin volumes of

\* History of the Intellectual Development of Europe. By John William Draper, M.D. 2 vols, 8vo. London: Bell and Daldy. 1864.

Draper are as accurately finished off as an elementary treatise on a thoroughly perfected branch of science. Buckle writes to prove, Draper to teach. In Buckle we trace genius and energy trying to make themselves a path. In Draper, like an American railroad, the way may be long, but it is cut sheer through the forest, from one extremity of the continent of history to the other. The text of Buckle stands on a deep foundation of notes: every statement is supported by a quotation. No reference stains the clear white pages of Draper. If you want them, consult the first great library at hand. Buckle, after laying down the principle that all consequents are determined by all the antecedents, takes up history at a period when the accumulation of antecedents is considerable enough to be easily estimated, and proceeds to show how the succeeding consequences were, in fact, inevitable. The only inevitable things to Draper are those which are equally so to the individuals—birth, maturity, and death. No power can arrest the development when once begun; no skill can save nations from their fate. The chain of events drawn out by Buckle has no end. Those exhibited by Draper are a series of similar rings or circles; not exactly alike, but similar. The smaller ones would answer to those nations who have lived fast and died fast; who have sprung suddenly from nothingness, and returned quickly to it again, but still have lived their life. Of these the Arabs are an example. Others may have been destroyed before completing their existence by coming in contact with some more powerful organisation, as frequently happens to individuals. Others lie for a long time in a state of torpid infancy, and eventually reach an extreme old age, having in a long series of ages passed through all the phases incident to national life. Amongst these, China ought to be the most interesting to us. For, “Europe is inevitably hastening to become what China is. In her we may see what we shall be like when we are old.”—“To a like organisation of their national intellect, and to giving it a political control, the countries of Europe are thus rapidly advancing. They are hastening to satisfy their instinctive tendency. In an all-important particular the prospect of Europe is bright; China is passing through the last stage of civil life in the cheerlessness of Buddhism, Europe approaches it through Christianity.”—“Nations, like individuals, are born, proceed through a predestined growth and die. One comes to its end at an early period, and in an untimely way; another, not until it has gained maturity. For every one there is an orderly way of progress to its final term, whatever that term may be.”

An attempt is here made to smooth the parting agonies of the nations of Europe to a fate they are not perhaps willing to admit is either so near or so certain as our author supposes. And an important

question arises at once, Are nations born and do they die in the same sense that individuals do? The answer to this must depend principally upon the sense we attach to the word nation. It has, for example, frequently been said of late that Italy, or the Italians never have yet been a nation. If this is actually true, we may soon expect to witness the occurrence of a remarkable event, that is, the birth of a nation. But a very little reflection would be enough to convince us that the accession of Venetia and Rome, though they might render the nationality of the Italians so patent a fact that no one could deny it, would no more be the birth of the nation than the acknowledgment of his birthright in a court of law would be the commencement of existence for an individual. On the other hand, the French are indubitably, in an ordinary conception, a nation of considerable antiquity, even if we carry their nationality no further back than the reign of Louis XI; yet, in a social and political view, they might be considered as dating only from the first years of the early Republic. Young France was the title they assumed; and though the portentous infant might have been in existence before, he had not woken to self-consciousness. In this way it is possible that nations may be going through the stages of existence much faster than even Draper imagines. Perhaps their career more resembles that of families than of individuals. A family, so long as it can retain the same property, has an unity which is perhaps after all more apparent than real. Its history, or rather the history of its first members, soon ceases to guide those who come after, if it is not recorded, which is seldom the case, even where the proofs of descent and the possession of the same property is retained. In this case, the traditions of the founder will continue to influence his descendants perhaps more than they are aware, as long as they are not incompatible with the surrounding circumstances, including in these the education and character of the individuals. But side by side with the governing tradition will spring up fresh maxims of conduct more adapted to the inevitable change going on around; and these will displace the original tradition or intellectual life of the family sooner or later, according to their intrinsic value, and the necessity or capacity for applying them, which may occur or be developed as fresh generations arise. When this event really has taken place, a family may be said to have died, and a new one taken its place, though the blood, and even the lineaments, and many of the external peculiarities may remain the same. The hour of departure may sometimes be more distinctly marked than that of birth; but the family, in the aggregate sense, will be quite unconscious of either.

Sometimes the natural decay of a family, in this sense, is accelerated

by the will of its head; sometimes his death, leaving an heir to be brought up by a wife of strange blood and different objects, will effect an equally violent change more naturally; sometimes descendants may repeat the lives, the emotions, and even the words of persons of whose very existence they are even unconscious. A family may thus run through its course in the person of an individual, or may prolong its existence for generations, but will, in common parlance, be considered as one and the same so long as the name and social condition remain unaltered.

Thus, also, it is with nations. Each European state contains within it an infant, an adolescent, a mature, and a dying form of intellectual life. Each of these emanations of the present or past generations has its votaries, its dissidents, and its enemies. Each may be said, in its full maturity, to govern and form the nation; and with each, in reality, a nation is born and also passes away, and is no more conscious of the moment of birth and extinction than a family or an individual.

Europe may be hastening to intellectual organisation, but that is no proof of the necessity of future decay. One form of intellectual power may succeed another for a series of ages. The nations may be changed with them as much in reality as they were a thousand years ago by the coarser commixture of intrusive races; but the changes will not be so visible, and the descent, position, and name of our descendants will remain the same.

We cannot, therefore, quite acquiesce in what might seem here to be valued as the principal results of the philosophy of history. But we may reasonably doubt if the author was ever really inclined to consider this hypothesis in any other light than a framework on which to stretch his sketch of a long series of connected truths. That the thoughts of men widen as the generations roll on, and that intellect eventually governs the world, that truth—scientific and demonstrated truth—will prevail over the most highly organised form of superstition and repression the world has ever seen, are here set forth in such a way as to compel conviction even from the unwilling.

The work is divided into two main portions, viz., accounts of the Grecian and European ages of credulity, inquiry, faith, reason, and decrepitude. The history of the former, commencing with the Ionian school, and terminating with the death of Hypatia, or the closing of the schools of Athens by Justinian, shows at once that such an orderly progress of intellectual life and death is by no means in any way continuous with that of a nation. Nor can the second be any better identified with the rise or fall of individual nationalities.

So much having been said in derogation of what is after all more a

conventional than a substantial difference of opinion, we proceed to the more agreeable task of giving some slight idea of the merits of this magnificent work.

It is pre-eminently a practical book. The application of its arguments, its erudition, and its proofs to the controversies and the needs of the social state of the present can be mistaken by no one. Even when the reasoning points to the inevitable approach of European decrepitude, it seems that such a consummation can be avoided if statesmen will only be wise in time, and, instead of identifying our fate with a crumbling religion, will hail as allies the youthful philosophy of demonstrated and demonstrable truth. Not that anything could have saved the downfall of ancient polytheism, or supported the vague speculations of the Neo-Platonists. But it was not necessary that the pagan religion and pagan knowledge should be destroyed together. Though Constantine sometimes professed Christianity, he need not have given up the Asclepiens, the hospitals of antiquity, to the ignorant zeal of the Christians. In them once already had been fought the old battle of reason and superstition. In earlier times, as in our own, it was difficult to convince the illiterate classes that in sickness we ought to help ourselves, and not expect relief by penance and supplications, unless we join therewith rigorous personal, domestic, municipal cleanliness, fresh air and light. But Hippocrates had already deserved the great glory of destroying the theological notions of disease, and had replaced them by more practical and material ideas, and from the votive tablets, traditions, and other sources, together with his own admirable observations, compiled a body of medicine. Thus the pursuits of the physician had been severed from those of the priest, and as we may well believe, not without a struggle. But science had, in this particular, received support from some enlightened rulers. The temple of Serapis in Alexandria was also, in fact, a hospital, and under the Ptolemies, the sure basis of anatomy was laid as the foundation of a medical school. Herophilus and his colleagues were authorised to resort to the dissection of the dead, and to ascertain, by that only reliable method, the true structure of the human body. The strong hand of Philadelphus resolutely carried out his design, though in a country where popular sentiment was strongly opposed to such practices, hitherto unheard-of in the world, for to touch a corpse was in Egypt an abomination.

But when Constantine and his successors, under ecclesiastical influence, had declared themselves the enemies of worldly learning, it became necessary for the clergy to assume the duty of seeing to the physical as well as the religious condition of the people. It was unsuited to the state of things that physicians, whose philosophical ten-

dencies inclined them to the pagan party, should be any longer endured. The Asclepiions were replaced by other institutions more agreeable to the genius of Christianity. Noble as were the hospitals and charities of the Empress Helena and pious Christian women, they laboured under an essential defect in having substituted for educated physicians well-meaning but unskilful ecclesiastics. The sick who were placed in these benevolent institutions were at the best under the care of kind nurses; and the consequences are seen in the gradually increasing credulity and imposture of succeeding ages, until at length there was an almost universal reliance on miraculous intervention. Fetiches, said to be the relics of saints, but no better than those of tropical Africa, were believed to cure every disorder. To the shrines of saints crowds repaired, as they had at one time to the temples of Æsculapius. The worshippers remained, though the name of the divinity was changed.

“Scarcely were the Asclepiions closed, the schools of philosophy prohibited, the libraries dispersed or destroyed, learning branded as magic or punished as treason, philosophers driven into exile, and as a class exterminated, when it became apparent that a void had been created which it was incumbent on the victors to fill. Among the great prelates, who was there to stand in the place of those men whose achievements had glorified the human race? Who was to succeed Archimedes, Hipparchus, Euclid, Herophilus, Eratosthenes? who, Plato and Aristotle? The quackeries of miracle-cure, shrine-cure, relic-cure were destined to eclipse the genius of Hippocrates, and nearly 2000 years to intervene between Hipparchus and Kepler. A dismal interval of almost twenty centuries parts Hero, whose first steam-engine revolved in the Scrapion, from James Watt, who has revolutionised the industry of the world. What a fearful blank! Yet not a blank, for it had its products—hundreds of patristic folios filled with obsolete speculations, oppressing the shelves of antique libraries, enveloped in dust, and awaiting the worm.

“Such, then, were the first-fruits of the introduction of a new religion into the Roman world. But violence done to edifices and institutions was soon extended to individuals, whose opinions could only be reached in that way. By the murder of Hypatia, the position of philosophy in the intellectual metropolis of the world was determined; henceforth science must sink into obscurity and subordination. Its public existence was no longer tolerated. Indeed, it may be said that from that moment, for some centuries, it altogether disappeared. The leaden mace of bigotry had struck and shivered the exquisitely tempered steel of Greek philosophy. It was thence ascertained that throughout the Roman world there must be no more liberty of thought. It has been said that these events prove Greek philosophy to have been a sham, and, like other shams, it was driven out of the world when it was detected, and that it could not withstand the truth. Such assertions might answer their purposes very well, so long as the vic-

tors maintained their power in Alexandria, but they manifestly are of inconvenient application after the Saracens had captured the city."

The general explanation of these events is, that Greek philosophy and the Greek intellect was not indeed a sham, but had survived its maturity, and was now in its decrepitude; and that another round of credulity, of inquiry, faith, and reason must be begun, to be succeeded by another epoch of decrepitude, beyond which no one can at present penetrate. But this is not an explanation to be received without considerable demur. Draper, indeed, has answered it himself in one of his most suggestive passages, and we cannot improve upon him.

"Except the death of a nation, there is no event in human history more profoundly solemn than the passing away of an ancient religion, though religious ideas are transitory, and creeds succeed one another with a periodicity determined by the law of continuous variation of human thought. The intellectual epoch at which we have now arrived has for its essential characteristic such a succession of change—the abandonment of a time-honoured but obsolete system—the acceptance of a new and living one; and, in the incipient stages, opinion succeeding opinion in a well-marked way, until at length, after a few centuries of fusion and solution, there crystallised on the remnant of Roman power, as on a nucleus, a definite form, which, slowly modifying itself into the Papacy, served the purposes of Europe for more than a thousand years throughout its age of Faith. In this abandonment *the personal conduct of the educated classes* very powerfully assisted. They outwardly conformed to the ceremonial of the times, reserving their higher doctrines to themselves, as something beyond vulgar comprehension. It had come to an evil state when authors like Polybius and Strabo apologised to their compeers for the traditions and legends they ostensibly accepted, on the ground that it is inconvenient and needless to give popular offence, and that those who are children in understanding must, like those who are children in age, be kept in order by bugbears. In Rome, at the time of Augustus, the intellectual classes, philosophers and statesmen, had completely emerged from the ancient modes of thought. In one sense they had passed into liberty, in another they were in bondage. Their indisposition to encounter those inflictions with which their illiterate contemporaries might visit them, may seem to us surprising: they acted as if they thought that the public was a wild beast that would bite, if awakened too abruptly from its dream; but their pusillanimity, at the most, could only postpone for a little an inevitable day. The ignorant classes, whom they had so much feared, awoke spontaneously in due season, and saw in the clear light how matters stood.

"Of the Roman emperors there were some whose intellectual endowments were of the highest kind; yet, though it must have been plain to them, as to all who turned their attention to the matter, in what direction society was drifting, they let things take their course, and no one lifted a finger to guide. It was not to be expected that



the popular mind could spontaneously extricate itself from the vicious circle in which it was involved. Nothing but philosophy was competent to deliver it, and philosophy failed in its duty at the critical moment. When the intellectual basis of a religion is gone, it is much better for a wise government to abstain from all compulsion in behalf of what has become untenable, and to throw itself into the new movement so as to shape the career by assuming the lead. Philosophy is useless when misapplied in support of things which common sense has begun to reject; she shares in the discredit which is attaching to them. The opportunity of rendering herself of service to humanity once lost, ages may elapse before it occurs again. Of all the duties of an enlightened government, this of allying itself with philosophy in the critical moment in which society is passing through so serious a metamorphosis of its opinions as is involved in the casting off of its ancient investiture of Faith, and its assumption of a new one, is the most important, for it stands connected with things that outlast all temporal concerns."

Those who think that their religion stands on a basis which cannot be compared with that of ancient polytheism, may at least inquire how that religion has met the epoch of European inquiry and reason.

Perhaps they would say that no comparison can fairly be instituted. The cases are not parallel, and no ingenuity can make them so. They would tell us that the security of society, of property, and of all that is valuable in modern civilisation, depend upon a rigid adherence to the religious dogmas of the day. This is precisely the argument that was used by the upper classes of Rome against the inroads of Christianity, and which was answered so triumphantly by St. Augustine. He anticipated by fourteen centuries what was thought a profane speech in the mouth of Napoleon, by observing that victory had always depended not on God, but on the valour of the legions. Let them consider how many things tend to show that society is returning to the state it was in when the disturbances caused by the introduction of a new religion, and new principles of duty and morality, among which patriotism and respect for antiquity had no place, so much contributed to its overthrow.

Our communications between most parts of Europe though more rapid are scarcely more complete than in the days of Julian or Theodosius. The habits of modern nations are singularly approximating to what they were before Christianity destroyed the confidence which must have subsisted in families who had but one general form, though many objects of worship. One of the first social things abandoned by new converts were the baths; and how curious it is to see all over Europe these institutions rising again on the very spots where they fell together with the worship of the healing divinities of the fountain. In England their place is supplied by clubs, and now by the

large hotels at the seaside. Conversation here is freer than anywhere else, for men are released from the fear of the expression of their opinions doing them injury, when they may never see their auditors again. Nothing was so much dreaded for an early convert, as free intercourse with his equals in the unrestrained society which congregated in the halls and libraries of the ancient thermæ.

"Make me Bishop of Rome and I will become a Christian," said the prefect of Rome. Is there no bishop we can fancy on the other hand saying now, "Secure me the income and state of a bishop and I will give up being a Christian?" Do we not hear in the clamours for an ecclesiastical court of religion the same accents which first endeavoured to place the church above kings? Has not the nominal power over testaments been but recently taken away, which the clergy inherited with the temple lands that so many of their churches still occupy? Are not marriage and its dissolution made civil proceedings, which were also once in the jurisdiction of that religion the church has superseded? Will the creed of Europe return to its primitive condition? the ill-understood worship of an obscure and low-born sect!

When Constantine joined his fortunes to those of Christianity, the votaries of the old religion are supposed to have numbered still one-half of his empire. At the census of 1851 only one-half of our population professed the doctrines of the established church. The words of those who fear the introduction of new opinions are singularly analogous. "And some fabulous and hideous darkness is about to domineer over that which is most beautiful on earth," says Eunapius\* on the approach of Christianity. "Much more true is the explanation, which sees in it the first stealing over the sky of the livid lights which shall be shed profusely around the great Antichrist," says the Bishop of Oxford on the appearance of *Essays and Reviews*. Is there then no parallel between the first centuries of our era and the final ones of its second millennium? Our first millennium closed amidst general apprehensions of the simultaneous end of all things. Is our third to commence unchecked by the hopes and fears of The Last Christian? A closer investigation of this question would lead us beyond our province. The more general answer of Draper occupies the greater part of his second volume.

"In individual life, since no precise natural epoch exists, society has found it expedient to establish an artificial one, as, for example, the twenty-first year. The exigencies of history may be satisfied by similar fictions. We might thus be justified in considering the foundation of Constantinople as the commencement of our age of

\* Καὶ τι μυθωδὲς καὶ ἀειδὲς σκότος τυραννῆσει τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς κάλλιστα. Eunapius in the *Life of Œcadius*, p. 41, ed. Boissonade, 8vo., Amst., 1822.

+ *Replies to Essays and Reviews*, pref., xi.

faith, and its capture by the Turks as the close. The animosity between the Byzantine ecclesiastical system and all worldly wisdom was inextinguishable. In Europe there had been incorporated old forms of worship and old festivals with Christian ones without any scruple. There had been produced a civilisation, the character of which was its extraordinary intolerance. A man could not be suspected of doubting the popular belief without risk to his goods, his body, or his life. As a necessary consequence, there could be no great lawgivers, no philosophers, no poets. And the Roman ecclesiastical system likewise had been irrevocably committed in an opposition to intellectual development. It professed to cultivate the morals, but it crushed the mind.

"But the age of inquiry at last began. The irruption of the Arabs into Spain raised the awkward question, by what means the infidel could possibly obtain such great triumphs. It was not by his better faith, and therefore it must be by superior knowledge. Might not one be appropriated without the other. The Spanish Moors and Jews had besides begun to influence the higher European classes. The Jewish physicians and the Jewish usurers were in every court and in every great household. At last the formal intellectual attack upon the dogmas of the church commenced.

"The Saracens had long been assiduous cultivators of astronomy in all its branches. They had applied to it both observation and mathematical observation. Upon one point, the figure and relations of the earth, it is evident that not the slightest doubt existed among them. And it was upon this very point that the reason and faith of modern Europe came to issue. The memorable battle was fought upon the question thus sharply defined; Is the earth a moving globe, a small body in the midst of blazing suns and countless myriads of worlds; or is it the central and greatest object in the universe, flat, and canopied over with a blue dome, motionless while all is in movement around it? The dispute thus definitively put, its issue was such as must always attend upon a controversy in which he who is defending is at once lukewarm and conscious of his own weakness. Never can moral interest, however pure, stand against intellect enforcing truth. On this ill-omened question the church ventured her battle and lost it."

The same evil instinct which tore Hypatia piecemeal in the church at Alexandria brought Galileo before the inquisition at Rome. Still it was a stouter heart than his which first proved the earth to be a sphere. The moral effects of the voyage of Magellan were far greater than those of the discoveries of Columbus. "But though the church hath evermore from Holy Writ affirmed that the earth should be a wide-spread plain bordered by the waters, yet he comforted himself when he considered that in the eclipses of the moon the shadow cast of the earth is round." It proved a fact which could never afterwards be disputed. But it was passed over in silence. The church was probably too ignorant, or too arrogant to study the fall of the religion it had superseded, and pursued the same system of hypocrisy in high places which had given such a powerful weapon to those who

once wanted to attack the idols of Roman dominion. In due time arrived Copernicus and Galileo with the heliocentric theory. The earth was at once reduced to the position of being, instead of a chosen or sacred spot, only one of similar myriads, subject to universal law in every movement, and generated an inconceivable distance of time before, by law as definite and unalterable. The end of the conflict was a total rejection of authority and tradition, and the adoption of scientific truth. Those whose interests lay in the perpetuation of former ideas and the ancient order of things, looked with intolerable apprehension on what was taking place. They saw plainly that this intellectual activity would at last find a political expression, and that a power, daily increasing in intensity, would not fail to make itself felt in the end.

Thus they have never ceased to struggle against every fresh advance of human thought and knowledge. The doctrine of providential interruptions at the *creation* of the earth, then at the origin of species, or organic life, and always in the life of the individual, and in the history of man, has never yet been really abandoned by the Christian world.

“ Yet the progression of life on the surface of our planet is under the guidance of preordained and resistless law, it is affiliated with material and correspondingly changing conditions. It suggests that the succession of organic forms which, in a due series, the earth’s surface in the long lapse of time has presented, is the counterpart of a like progress which other planets in the solar system exhibit in myriads of years, and leads us to the conception of the rise, development, and extinction of a multiplicity of such living forms in other systems; a march of life through the universe and its passing away. With the abandonment of the geocentric theory, and of the doctrine of the human destiny of the universe, have vanished the unworthy hypothesis of the recent date of creation and the approaching end of all things. In their stead are substituted more noble ideas. The multiplicity of worlds in infinite space leads to the conception of a succession of worlds in infinite time. This existing universe, with all its splendours, had a beginning, and will have an end; it had its predecessors, and will have its successors; but its march through all its transformations is under the control of laws as unchangeable as destiny.

“ But is it probable that the individual proceeds in his movement under law, that the planet also proceeds in its movement under law, but that society does not proceed under law ? ”

This is the last stronghold to which the enemies of science have retreated. Once let history be taught on scientific principles, and society will have no reason to dread an age of decrepitude, though the vanguard of human improvement may sometimes be held by one nation, and sometimes by another; sometimes be found in America, in Australasia, and sometimes again in Europe.

There are three classes of men whose interests are bound up, or fancied to be so, in opposing the installation of the last and most important of all the sciences. Of the clergy we need not speak.\* The fifth monarchy, which they look, or ought to look for, would clearly not result from the evolution of any law hitherto known. Hence, to interpret the future from the past is not a pretension they can tolerate, and any attempt to do so is stigmatised as the madness of intellectual arrogance. Secondly, come those statesmen, happily now few in number, who wish to substitute their individual will for the dictates of public opinion, or rather perhaps of public instinct. This, however, is a class from whom there is little to fear, and much to hope. For should a philosophic statesman arise, who would embrace the idea of uniting the power still belonging to the governing classes with those more secret powers which, whether existing in individuals or in theories, are labouring for the development of intellectual and scientific organisation, he might commence a career which would surpass in utility and even in reputation what any heaven-born minister has achieved.

Lastly come a numerous and still powerful class; who, having dethroned the priesthood and made themselves masters of the true pulpit of our day, literary eminence, are loth to give place to any system which would measure the value of their labours more or less according to their scientific accuracy, and reduce them in many cases to a position little better than that of successful novelists. It is exactly from the Kingsleys and the Froudes, from those to whom history seems avowedly "like a child's box of letters with which we can spell any word we please; we have only to pick out such letters as we want, arrange them as we like, and say nothing about those which do not suit our purpose," or those who start with the avowed purpose of teaching history in such a way as shall give satisfaction to the Rulers of an University, that we should expect the loudest declamations against the universality of law. Let history once become a science, its different phases be mapped out more or less precisely, and the present *historian* would be at best a mere biographer, and that of persons of whose domestic life, and of the development of whose mind the smallest materials for forming an opinion exist. The process of whitewashing, as it is called, or even of blackening

\* It is a pity that the action of the Church should give sufficient grounds for the composition of such a book as *Gospel Paganism*. The author is sincere, and an ardent searcher for truth. His tone and arguments will give pain to many; nor can the want of originality be justly objected to ideas which are fast becoming the thoughts of every one. It is all the more unfortunate that he should be able to say that the Church, in the person of the Bishop of Oxford (Pref. to *Replies to Essays and Reviews*), "still daringly calls for the repressive action of authority to forbid enlightenment." (*Gospel Paganism; or Reason's Revolt against the Revealed*. Austin and Co., London, 1864. 8vo.)

some famous character, would lose all its interest. Between the good old Roman histories of Romulus and Remus, with their large print, quaint woodcuts, and delightfully short letter-press, and the scientific treatise unfolding to the future statesman or philosopher the development of law in human history, there would be no other intermediate steps than there now are between the early picture-books of natural history, and the regular course of zoological study. It is not then surprising that the discoverers of the continence of Henry VIII, and the inflexible justice of Frederic the Great, as they sit in the seat of authority, should use the same weapons their predecessors used, and indeed still continue to use, against themselves. To send Cyril to his own place in a novel may be well enough, but the unfortunate theologian who overstates the case of his adversaries, must be content to lose his reputation for orthodoxy, even though he may attempt to please the successors of Newton and Paley, by venturing to oppose the law of gravitation and breaking "through the rules of his being".

There seems to be a singular misconception in the minds of some as to the meaning of a law of history. They think the existence of such a law sufficiently disproved, if it can be shown that the action of an individual, or of any small knot of men, has produced great and unexpected effects, especially if these effects are in a direction which was also unexpected. Now the career of an individual, or the exertions of a party, must always be governed by, or in unison with the great principles which determine the progress of human society. But they may often be apparently opposed to them. If they are, then the observers may think that the laws of history, as laid down by experience, are suspended. But it is not really so. They resemble either boys who throw stones down a precipice, and mistake the natural effect for the result of their own actions, or those who laboriously strive to control natural laws, which, however, universal experience has now found out can only be done by obeying them.

Not less superficial is the criticism upon the doctrine of averages, as applied by Buckle. "Unfortunately the average", it is said, "of one generation will not be the average of the next". No more is the average of life; but still insurance tables are not worthless. The average of every year, of every month—nay, of every day, alters. If we wished to calculate the average duration of the existence of the ephemera, we should employ minutes or seconds to record our observations. Dealing with the actions of men we employ years, generations, or even centuries, according as events have moved fast or slow. Thus, if we wish to ascertain whether ecclesiastical power is on the decrease or otherwise, the experience of a generation does not give sufficient data. We heard it seriously argued three years ago, that the Papacy was getting more powerful, because exactly fifty

years before the Pope was a prisoner in the hands of Napoleon. Take, however, several epochs of fifty years duration, and no one can differ about the result. Crimes accompanied with violence are less frequent now than ever before; those of fraud more so. But will this go on? Can we in any way foresee the future? If not, there is no true science of history. And no one can foresee anything, says the objector. "Gibbon believed that the era of conquerors was at an end."—"But a few years ago we believed the world had grown too civilised for war."—It would be answer enough to reply that Gibbon never believed anything of the kind, but said merely that the invention of fire-arms would prevent any second overthrow of the nations of western Europe by savage immigrants from the east; and that if "we", that is, all sensible people, had *believed* in the extinction of wars, we should have disbanded our armies.

But a better answer is, that those who do not understand, and will not employ the methods of a science, cannot of course be expected to foresee anything; and whilst those who do may be counted on the fingers and ridiculed for their attempts, we are not likely to prove the reasonableness of the pretensions of a science by the accuracy of its predictions. This test, by the way, was invented by Comte, and applied as an argument, *a posteriori*, to show the perfection to which astronomy had arrived. Science, however, existed long before it could predict; though that power may be necessary to prove that it has arrived at maturity. And those who have truly studied history have not been so deficient in that power as we are told. Napoleon at St. Helena exercised no mean faculty of prediction. Lord Chesterfield's announcement of the coming of the French Revolution is known to every one. Much, indeed, of what is to come, is seen so long before, that people at last believe the prediction to be a mistake. The ignorant would no doubt credit the astronomer royal if he told them an eclipse was to take place to-morrow; but if he were to predict one for 10,000 years hence, he would at least be thought a very heterodox person. The science of history, like every other, can make but little progress till it is honestly embraced, and put upon a fair trial.

Another reason why there is difficulty in procuring a general acknowledgment that man socially is governed by fixed laws, arises from the necessity we are under of speaking of individuals as exercising an absolute control over many events. But this, after all, is no more inconsistent with scientific accuracy, however much shallow critics may laugh at it, than for the astronomer to speak of the rising or setting of the sun. When history is relegated to those who have really studied it, its professors will still continue to use the ordinary language of those they address, though indeed, in that day, without

fear of being misunderstood. They will still condemn or applaud the actions and the actors as circumstances seem to require, herein following the usual course, which implies that men can control affairs, and that the agent is to be held responsible for his deed. But objectors need only consider the course of their own lives, to be satisfied as to how limited an extent such is the case.

“We are, as we often say so, the creatures of circumstances. In that expression there is a higher philosophy than might at first sight appear. Our actions are not the pure and unmingled results of our desires; they are the offspring of many various and mixed conditions. In that which seems to be the most voluntary decision there enters much that is altogether involuntary—more, perhaps, than we generally suppose. And in like manner, those who are imagined to have exercised an irresponsible and spontaneous influence in determining public policy, and thereby fixing the fate of nations, will be found, when we understand their position more correctly, to have been the creatures of circumstances altogether independent and irrespective of them—circumstances which they never created, of whose influence they only availed themselves. Over the events of life we may have a control, but none whatever over the law of its progress. There is a geometry which applies to nations, an equation of their curve of advance.”

This is the great theme, well and worthily handled by Draper. To this end the efforts of many of the highest minds of the day are converging, effects at once and causes of the progress of historical science. With nothing short of this can Anthropology be complete or content. The youngest born of all the sciences, it addresses itself to the greatest problems which affect man, either as an individual or a species. Our author thinks a man must be satisfied if only his book lives a little longer than himself. But the great generalizations he propounds will not be so speedily surpassed: and he has wisely taken care that his own work shall not be deficient in the interest which attaches to minute research or minute comparison. Many of the smaller episodes are here well elaborated. Nowhere do we remember to have seen so interesting a picture of the great museum of the Ptolemies at Alexandria, or its importance in the history of the sciences so well brought out.

The influence of the Arabian literature on the mind of Europe is perhaps slightly exaggerated. The Grecian literature must, as soon as it became known, have stimulated those who first had access to it much in the way it eventually did, even without the assistance of Averroes and the Saracenic physicians. But do not let any one suppose that Mahomedanism is rated above its value. The spurious philosophy which would set its simple dogma above that of Christianity finds no favour here. It was not by virtue, but in spite of its precepts, that knowledge and learning found an asylum in the country of the Koran. The estimate of that book is impartial and profound.



"Considering the asserted origin of this book—indirectly from God himself—we might justly expect that it would bear to be tried by any standard that man can apply, and vindicate its truth and excellence in the ordeal of human criticism. We ought to look for universality, completeness, perfection. We might expect that it would present us with just views of the nature and position of this world in which we live, and that, whether dealing with the spiritual or the material, it would put to shame the most celebrated productions of human genius, as the magnificent mechanism of the heavens and the beautiful living forms of the earth are superior to the vain contrivances of man. Far in advance of all that has been written by the sages of India or the philosophers of Greece on points connected with the origin, nature, and destiny of the universe, its dignity of conception and excellence of expression should be in harmony with the greatness of the subject with which it is concerned.

"We might expect that it should propound with authority, and definitively settle those all-important problems which have exercised the mental powers of the ablest men of Asia and Europe for so many centuries, and which are at the foundation of all faith and all philosophy; that it should distinctly tell us in unmistakable language what is God, what is the world, what is the soul, and whether man has any criterion of truth; that it should explain to us how evil can exist in a world the Maker of which is omnipotent, and altogether good; that it should reveal to us in what the affairs of men are fixed by Destiny, in what by free will; that it should teach us whence we came, what is the object of our continuing here, and what is to become of us hereafter. And, since a written word claiming a divine origin must necessarily accredit itself even to those most reluctant to receive it, its internal evidences becoming stronger and not weaker with the strictness of the examination to which they are submitted, it ought to deal with those things that may be demonstrated by the increasing knowledge and genius of man, anticipating therein his conclusions. Such a work, noble as may be its origin, must not refuse, but court the test of natural philosophy, regarding it not as an antagonist, but as its best support. As years pass on, and human science becomes more exact and more comprehensive, its conclusions must be found in unison therewith. When occasion arises, it should furnish us at least the foreshadowings of the great truths discovered by astronomy and geology, not offering for them the wild fictions of earlier ages, inventions of the infancy of man. It should tell us how suns and worlds are distributed in infinite space, and how, in their successions, they come forth in limitless time. It should say how far the dominion of God is carried out by law, and what is the point at which it is his pleasure to resort to his own good Providence or his arbitrary will . . . The discussion of subjects, so many and so high, is not outside the scope of a work of such pretensions. Its manner of dealing with them is the only criterion it can offer of its authority to succeeding times.

"Tried by such a standard, the *Koran* altogether fails. On speculative or doubtful things it is copious enough; but in the exact, where a test can be applied to it, it totally fails. Its astronomy, cosmogony,

physiology are so puerile as to invite our mirth, if the occasion did not forbid . . . . As to man, Mohammed is diffuse enough respecting a future state, speaking with clearness of a resurrection, the judgment-day, Paradise, the torment of hell, the worm that never dies, the pains that never end; but, with all this precise description of the future, there are many errors as to the past. One who is so unreliable a guide as to things that are past, cannot be very trustworthy as to events that are to come.

"The *Koran* abounds in excellent moral suggestions and precepts: we cannot turn to a single page without finding maxims of which all men must approve. There is a perpetual insisting on the necessity of prayer, and inculcation of mercy, almsgiving, justice, fasting, pilgrimage, and other good works; above all, a constant stimulation to do battle with the infidel and blasphemer . . . .

"From the contradictions, puerilities, and impossibilities indicated above, it may be anticipated that the faith of Mohammed has been broken into many sects. Thus there are, among the Shiites, those who believe that Ali was an incarnation of God; that he was in existence before the creation of things; that he never died, but ascended to heaven, and will return again in the clouds to judge the world. But the great Mohammedan philosophers, simply accepting the doctrine of the oneness of God as the only thing of which man can be certain, look upon all the rest as idle fables, having however this political use, that they furnish contention, and therefore occupation to disputatious sectarians, and consolation to illiterate minds."

The criterion of truth which is afforded to us neither by the *Koran*, nor, so far as we are aware, by any other book, is found to reside in the unanimous opinion of the whole human race. And though perhaps it is not an absolute criterion, yet we can rise by degrees to higher and higher certainties along an ascending scale which becomes more and more exact. Metaphysical writers who have treated on this point have been led into error from an imperfect conception of the true position of man; they have limited their thoughts to a single epoch of his course, and have not taken an enlarged and philosophical view. Probabilities increase with the number of consenting intellects, and hence the criterion of truth is capable of increased precision with the diffusion of enlightenment and knowledge.

The prospects of humanity are therefore full of hope. Good auguries may be drawn for philosophy from the great mechanical and material inventions which multiply the means of intercommunication, and, it may be said, annihilate terrestrial distances. In the intellectual collisions which must ensue, in the melting down of opinions, in the examinations and analyses of nations, truth will come forth. Whatever cannot stand that ordeal must submit to its fate. Lies and imposture, no matter how powerfully sustained, must prepare to depart. In that supreme tribunal man may place implicit confidence. Even though,

philosophically, it is far from absolute, it is the highest criterion vouchsafed to him, and from its decision he has no appeal.

The argument of this work is no way concerned with the antiquity of man, or the question of unity or plurality of species. The Peruvian and the Chinese have run, or would have run through analogous phases of civilisation with the European and the Arab, only varied by the adventitious circumstances of soil, climate, and foreign intervention. This will be considered perhaps by professed anthropologists the weakest part of the undertaking. But until some more general agreement upon those controverted points has been come to in the scientific world, it is as well for the philosophic historian to regard such differences, even if they exist, as of small moment beside his main purpose. The equation of each nation may be different, but the rules for solving all must be the same. He who should attempt to treat history palæontologically, and having completed a survey of human races as they exist, should endeavour to calculate what they have been, and what they sprung from, would find the very first steps of the problem quite insurmountable. It is only in recorded history that we can trace the movement of mankind, and those nations or races which have none, or but a very imperfect one, can never present much enduring interest except to the anatomist and physiologist. In that way, and as a foil to the historic nations, their importance is great; but when the consent of the higher intellects has extracted from the chaos of the materials now called history, all that is really valuable, and arranged it in scientific order, and given each specimen, so to speak, of human or national activity its true place in the general series of human progress, there will still remain more than enough to task the most unremitting industry in the explanation of these phenomena, without giving any special attention to the department of the physical anthropologist. To the latter class of inquiry belongs the question why some races of man seem never to have had a history. But we must not be too hasty in assuming this to be the case, because the records have not reached us. The careers of Greece and Rome would never of themselves have left behind sufficient materials for giving those nations their true place in history, had it not been pieced out and interpreted by aid of the more complete information we possess of what has happened to ourselves in modern times. No one can doubt that Egypt, and probably Persia, have also enacted parts which want "but history's purchased page" to show their importance. They preferred mural inscriptions to the more fragile papyrus, and their experience was in consequence early lost to those who came after them, and Europe has had to go through the severe discipline of the dark ages before it could even appreciate the height from which mankind had fallen in the persons of the eastern nations.

The United States, again, can trace their course from the very beginning. They might denounce the origin of every other nation as barbarous compared with their own, as being deficient in all the real foundation for historical superstructure, that is, the knowledge of the races, the mixtures, or the aborigines of their country. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at, that the highest problems of anthropology should be so well handled in a country which has so many reasons and so many advantages for the cultivation of the last and final one in the series of the sciences. We accept this book as an earnest of what we may expect from the intellectual genius of a nation which is now going through an ordeal that must, in any event, be inconceivably brief and mild compared with those through which Europe has arrived at its Age of Reason.

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### RACES OF THE OLD WORLD.\*

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THE thanks of the world are undoubtedly due to any one who compresses into a reasonable form trustworthy information regarding a subject so vast, so various, so chaotic as the phenomena of mankind, and before taking Mr. Brace to task for the manner in which he has performed the promise of his work, it is only fair to quote one of the opening paragraphs of his preface, in which he says :—

“The present manual of the ethnology of the old world (Mr. Brace is writing from an American point of view) is designed not so much for the learned as for the large number of persons who are interested in the study of history, whether in academies or colleges, or among people of business and professions. Such (*sic*) often desire to ascertain readily the position of a certain people or tribe among the races of men, or at least to know the latest conclusions of scholars in regard to them.”

So we are not to expect in this work a discussion of the advanced and unsettled problems of ethnographical science, but rather a kind of summing up, or taking stock as it were, of the results of modern research, gleaned from all the most trustworthy and reliable sources, and set forth plainly and simply for the enlightenment of the profane crowd awaiting some sign without the temple of science.

“The aim of this treatise has been,” says our author, “to separate the theoretical and the fanciful from the scientifically true; accord-

\* The Races of the Old World; a Manual of Ethnology. By Charles L. Brace. 8vo. London: 1863.